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REPORTS

O.N.I.

JULY 1914

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ATTACHE'S REPORTS

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July 25
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p. 1

DOCUMENTS FROM THE OFFICIAL FILES CONCERNING THE
PRELIMINARY HISTORY OF THE WAR.

In view of the efforts of our opponents to fix the blame for the present war upon the German military party and German militarismus, we publish the following series of reports from German diplomatic representatives abroad which have for their subject the political and military relations of the Entente-Powers before the outbreak of the war. Indication of the places of origin and of the exact dates is not given for reasons of expediency. These papers speak for themselves.

I.

.....March 1913.

The meshes of the net are drawing ever closer in which French diplomacy is managing to involve England. Already in the first phases of the Morocco conflict England, as is well known, has made with France an engagement of a military nature which since then has been solidified into a concrete understanding between the general staffs on both sides. In regard to the engagement for a co-operation by sea, I have learned from a usually well-informed source the following:

The English fleet undertakes the defense of the North Sea, of the Channel and the Atlantic Ocean so as to make it possible for France to concentrate her naval force in the western basin of the Mediterranean Sea, for which Malta will be placed at her disposition as a base for her fleet. The details relate to the employment of the French torpedo flotillas and submarines in the Channel and of the English Mediterranean squadron, which at the outbreak of war will be placed under the command of the French admiral.

In the meantime the attitude of the English Government during the Morocco crisis in the year 1911, in which it showed itself as an equally undiscerning and accommodating tool of French policy and by the speech of Lloyd George incited French Chauvinism to new hopes, the French Government has been offered a new tool with which to drive another nail into the coffin where the Entente policy has already laid away England's freedom of political purpose to sleep.

From a special source I have knowledge of an exchange of notes which took place in the previous year between Sir Edward Grey and Ambassador Cambon and which I have the honor to enclose here, with the request that it be treated in the strictest confidence. In the exchange of notes, the English and French Governments agree, in the event of a threatened attack on the part of a third power, to enter immediately into an exchange of views as to whether joint protection against the attack is called for and in that case whether and how far the existing military agreements shall be brought into action.

The form of the agreement bears the mark of the subtle English calculation. England undertakes no obligation whatever to render military assistance. According to the wording, she reserves a free hand always to be able to act solely according to her own interests. That by this agreement, in connection with the military understanding, England has de facto bound herself hopelessly to the French revenge spirit hardly needs to be pointed out.

The English Government is playing a dangerous game. By its policy in the Bosnian and Morocco questions it has aroused crises which brought Europe twice to the verge of war. The incitement of French Chauvinism of which continually they have directly or indirectly been the cause may one day lead to a

catastrophe for which the English as well as French soldiers will pay with their blood on the battlefield for the English encompassing policy.

The seed which King Edward sowed is coming up.

Letter of Sir E. Grey to the French
Ambassador, Paul Cambon.

Foreign Office
22 November 1912.

My dear Ambassadeur!

From time to time in recent years the French and British naval and military experts have consulted together. It has always been understood that such consultation does not restrict the freedom of either Government to decide at any future time whether or not to assist the other by armed force. We have agreed that consultation between experts is not and ought not to be regarded as an engagement that commits either Government to action in a contingency that has not arisen and may never arise. The disposition for instance of the French and British fleets respectively at the present moment is not based upon an engagement to co-operate in war.

You have, however, pointed out that if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, it might become essential to know whether it could in that event depend upon the armed assistance of the other.

I agree that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, or something that threatened the general peace, it should immediately discuss with the other whether both Governments should act together to prevent aggression and to preserve peace, and, if so, what measures they would be prepared to take in common. If these measures involved action, the plans of the general staffs would at once be taken into consideration and the Governments would then decide what effect should be given to them.

London, 23 November 1912.

Letter of the French Ambassador, Paul
Cambon, to Sir E. Grey.

By your letter dated yesterday, the 22nd of November, you recall to me that in recent years the military and naval authorities of France and Great Britain have consulted from time to time; that it has always been understood that these consultations did not restrain the freedom of either Government to decide in the future whether they would lend to each other the assistance of their armed forces; that on one side or the other the consultations between specialists were not and should not be considered as engagements obliging our Governments to act in certain cases; that, however, I had observed to you that if one or the other Government had grave reason to apprehend an unprovoked attack on the part of a third Power, it would become essential to know whether it could count on the assistance of the other. Your letter responds to this observation and I am authorized to declare to you that in the case where one of our Governments should have grave reason to apprehend either aggression on the part of a third Power or any event that would threaten the general peace, this Government would

immediately consult with the other whether the two Governments should act in concert with a view to prevent aggression or safeguard the peace. In such case, the two Governments would consult upon the measures which they would be disposed to take in common; if these measures should include action, the two Governments would at once take into consideration the plans of their general staffs and would decide then what effect should be given to these plans.

II.

.....May 1914.

Concerning the political results of the visit of the King of England in Paris, I learn that a number of political questions have been discussed between Sir Edward Grey and Monsieur Doumergue. In addition, the suggestion was made on the part of the French to supplement the existing special military political engagement between France and England by a similar engagement between England and Russia. Sir Edward Grey received the idea favorably, but declared himself unable without reference to the English Cabinet to undertake any obligation whatever. The reception of the English guests by the French Government, as well as by the French people, must have impressed the minister to a great degree. It is to be feared that the English statesman who appears abroad in his official capacity and, as it is said, has even left English soil for the first time, will be under French influence in the future to a still greater degree than has been the case hitherto.

III.

.....June 1914.

The news that a military engagement between England and Russia had been initiated in Paris on the part of the French during the visit of the King of England, has been confirmed. Regarding the preliminaries, I have been reliably informed that the proposition emanated from Herr Iswolski. The idea of the ambassador was to turn the expected cordial feeling of the days in Paris to account by converting the Triple Entente into an alliance analagous to the Triple Alliance. If in Paris and St. Petersburg they have been content with less, the reason therefor appears to be the serious consideration that a great part of public opinion in England is strongly opposed to the conclusion of any formal treaty of alliance with another Power. In face of this fact, although numerous proofs exist of the utter lack of resistance of English policy against the influence of the Entente -- I may recall the retinue of England which only recently Russia discovered in the question of the German military mission in Turkey -- while apparently trying to avoid so doing, they have all at once come into the whole thing. The tactics of making haste slowly were all the more resolved upon. Sir Edward Grey has warmly advocated the Franco-Russian proposition in the English ministerial council and the Cabinet has given its vote in favor. It has been decided in the first place to take in hand the forming of a naval agreement and to have the negotiations take place in London between the English admiralty and the Russian naval attache.

The satisfaction of the Russian and French diplomacy with this new surprising of the English politicians is great. The conclusion of a formal treaty of alliance is held to be only a question of time. To facilitate such a result, they are quite ready in St. Petersburg to make certain apparent concessions to England in the Persian question. The differences of opinion between the two Powers in this regard which have latterly risen to the surface have, as yet, found no settlement. The Russians work on for the present in tranquil assurance on account of the anxieties in England which have recently assumed prominence again in regard to the future of India.

IV.

.....June 1914.

There is considerable uneasiness in St. Petersburg and London concerning the French indiscretion over the Russian-English naval convention. Sir Edward Grey fears a question in Parliament. The naval attache, Capt. Wolkow, who has been some days in St. Petersburg presumably for instructions concerning the negotiations, has returned to London. The negotiations have already begun.

V.

.....June 1914.

In the House of Commons a question was asked the Government on the part of the Ministry whether Great Britain and Russia recently concluded a naval agreement and whether negotiations towards the conclusion of such an agreement had taken place recently between the two countries or were at present in hand.

In his answer, Sir Edward Grey referred to the similar question asked of the Government in the previous year. The Prime Minister had then answered, Sir Edward said, that in the event of the outbreak of a war between European powers there did not exist any unpublished agreement which would restrict or prevent the free decision of the Government or of Parliament as to whether or not Great Britain should take part in a war. This answer was today equally true as in the previous year. Since then no negotiations with any Power whatever had been concluded which would make the explanation in question less appropriate; no such negotiations were in course and also, as far as he could judge, it was improbable that any such would be entered into; if, however, any such agreement should be concluded which would necessitate the withdrawal or modification of the aforementioned declaration of the Prime Minister in the previous year, then the matter according to his view should be and in the event undoubtedly would be laid before Parliament.

The great majority of the English press refrained from any comment upon this declaration of the minister. Only the two radical papers, the "Daily News" and "Manchester Guardian" expressed themselves in brief leading articles. The first-named paper greeted the words of Sir Edward Grey with satisfaction and said that they were clear enough to destroy any doubts. England was not in tow of any other country. She was neither the vassal of Russia nor the ally of France, nor the enemy of Germany. This declaration would be a wholesome lesson for those of the English press who would make one believe that there was a Triple Entente substantially the same as the Triple Alliance.

The "Manchester Guardian" on the contrary was not satisfied with its involved form and tried to show that it admitted of interpretations which did not wholly exclude the existence of certain agreements, conditional, perhaps, of the kind of which rumors have been published.

The explanation of Sir Edward Grey agrees with a confidential utterance of a personage in the immediate vicinity of the minister.

"He could explicitly and definitely affirm that no kind of engagement whatever of a military or maritime nature exists between England and France, although such a wish on the part of the French has been repeatedly made known. What the English Cabinet has refused France will not be secured by Russia. No Fleet-Convention has been concluded with Russia and none will be."

1911.....
The first of these is the fact that the
Government has been successful in
obtaining the necessary funds for
the construction of the new
building.

1912.....
In the course of the year the
Government has been successful in
obtaining the necessary funds for
the construction of the new
building.

1913.....
In the course of the year the
Government has been successful in
obtaining the necessary funds for
the construction of the new
building.

1914.....
In the course of the year the
Government has been successful in
obtaining the necessary funds for
the construction of the new
building.

1915.....
In the course of the year the
Government has been successful in
obtaining the necessary funds for
the construction of the new
building.

1916.....
In the course of the year the
Government has been successful in
obtaining the necessary funds for
the construction of the new
building.

VI.

.....June 1914.

Sir Edward Grey has evidently found it necessary to reply emphatically to the criticism of the "Manchester Guardian" of his interpolation answer in the matter of the alleged English-Russian fleet agreement. The "Westminster Gazette" prints in a prominent position from the pen of Mr. Spenders, who is well known as one of the most intimate political friends of Sir Edward Grey, a dementi which in positiveness leaves nothing to be desired. It says: No fleet agreement exists and there are no negotiations pending concerning a fleet agreement between Great Britain and Russia. No one who is acquainted with the character and methods of Sir Edward Grey will for a moment assume that the explanation given out by him aims to veil the truth.

VII.

.....June 1914.

That the explanation of Sir Edward Grey in the British House of Commons concerning the Russian-English naval agreement has been so readily accepted by public opinion in England has brought great relief here and in St. Petersburg. The wirepullers in the matter were in fear lest their beautiful scheme of a new triple alliance would be only a dream. I find it difficult to believe that it can only be the "Manchester Guardian" that has seen through the trick which Sir Edward Grey has made use of by which he did not answer the question whether negotiations for a naval agreement with Russia were pending or in process but, on the contrary, denied the question which had not been put to him, whether England had entered into a binding obligation in regard to taking part in a European war. I incline rather to the opinion that the English press in this case has once again given proof of its well-known discipline in the treatment of questions of foreign politics; either it has kept silent at the word of command or from political instinct. What criticism and what faultfinding on the part of representatives of the German people and of the German press would the Imperial Government not be exposed to, what an uproar over our foreign policy and diplomats would not be aroused if a similar declaration were to be given before the Reichstag! In parliamentary England, if a minister in so notorious a way seeks to lead astray his own party, the interests of the people and the public opinion of the whole country, every man keeps silent. What sacrifice will England's Germanophobia not bring.

VIII.

.....June 1914.

From a quarter which has preserved its ancient sympathy for Germany has been communicated to me, with the request for the closest confidence, the enclosed notes of a conference held on the 26th of May of this year by the chief of the Russian naval staff, which fixes the basis for the negotiations concerning the Russian-English naval agreement. To what result the negotiations have yet reached my informant did not know; but he expressed serious concern for the furtherance which the Russian Nationalism would experience if the agreement should come into being. As soon as the cooperation in England became known, the well-known Panslavist agitators would not hesitate to make use of the opportunity offered to bring on a war. Herr Sasonow visibly pushes more and more into the wake of the Russian war party.

Enclosure.

St. Petersburg, 13-26 May 1914.

As a result of the consideration that an agreement between Russia and England was desired for the cooperation of their maritime forces in the event of hostile operations of Russia and England, with the participation of France, the conference arrived at the following decisions:

The projected naval convention shall regulate the relations between the Russian and English forces in all particulars. For this purpose an understanding will be brought about concerning signals and special ciphers, radio telegrams and the method of intercourse between the Russian and English naval staffs. The two naval staffs shall besides make a regular exchange of communications concerning the fleets of third Powers and their own fleets, especially concerning technical data, as well as machinery and inventions newly introduced.

Following the plan of the Franco-Russian naval convention, a regular exchange of views shall be arranged between Russian and English naval staffs for the examination of questions which interest the admiralities of both countries.

The Russian naval agreement with England, like the Franco-Russian agreement, shall keep an eye to allied but separate action of the Russian and the English navies. In regard to strategical purposes, there is to be on one side a distinction between maritime operations in the region of the Black Sea and of the North Sea and, on the other side, between the probable sea engagements in the Mediterranean. In both regions, Russia must endeavor to secure from England some return for the fact that the Russian draws to itself a part of the German fleet. In the region of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, temporary undertakings in that quarter of the sea shall be kept in view as strategic operations of Russia in the case of war. The Russian interests in the Baltic require that England should hold as large a part as possible of the German fleet in the North Sea. By that means, the crushing superiority of the German fleet over the Russian would be removed and perhaps a Russian landing in Pommerania become possible. The English Government could render toward this end a substantial service if before the beginning of war operations she could send a number of merchant ships into Baltic harbors large enough to make up for the lack in Russian transport ships.

Concerning the situation in the Mediterranean, it is most important for Russia that an assured superiority of force of the Entente over the Austro-Italian fleet should be established. For if the Austro-Italian forces should control this sea, attacks by the Austrian fleet in the Black Sea would be possible, which would be a dangerous blow to Russia. It must be assumed that the Austro-Italian forces exceed the French. England must, therefore, by leaving the necessary number of ships in the Mediterranean, insure the superiority of the forces of the Entente Powers at least while the development of the Russian navy has not proceeded far enough to undertake the solution of this problem itself. Russian ships must, with England's consent, be able to use as bases the English ports in the Eastern Mediterranean in the same way that the French naval convention permits the Russian fleet to base themselves upon the French harbors in the Western Mediterranean.

IX.

.....July 1914.

On the occasion of my conversation with Herr Sasonow today, the talk turned to the visit of Monsieur Poincare. The minister laid emphasis upon the peaceable tone of the toasts exchanged. I could not help calling to Herr Sasonow's attention that the cause for disquiet would not be given in the toasts exchanged during a visit of such a kind but rather in the press comments connected therewith. Such comments had not been wanting this time inasmuch as the news had been spread of the alleged conclusion of a Russian-English naval convention. Herr Sasonow snapped up these words and signified indignantly that such a naval convention existed only in "the fancy of the Berliner Tageblatt and in the moon".

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X.

.....July 1914.

I have the honor to forward herewith the copy of a paper which the adjutant of a Russian Grand Duke, passing the time here, has sent to the Grand Duke from St. Petersburg on the 25th of this month, and the substance of whose contents I have already reported by telegraph. The paper, knowledge of which I obtained from reliable source, shows in my humble opinion that since the 24th of this month Russia had resolved upon the war.

Enclosure.

12-25 July, Petersburg.

"In Petersburg there have been great disorders among the workmen which were notably coincident with the presence of the French among us and with the Austrian ultimatum to Servia. I heard yesterday from the French military agent, General de la Guiche, that he had heard that Austria was not free from blame in regard to these labor disorders. Now, however, normal conditions have been quite suddenly restored. And it appears that, encouraged by the French, our Government has ceased to tremble before the Germans. It is quite time. It is better to speak out clearly than to hide one'sself eternally behind the "professional lies" of the diplomats. The ultimatum of Austria is one of unheard of insolence, as all the journals of the day agree in saying. I have just read the afternoon paper -- yesterday was the session of the Ministerial Council; the Minister of War spoke very energetically and declared that Russia was ready for war and the other ministers joined with him in full. A report in the corresponding spirit was drawn up for the Czar and this report was presented the same evening. Today in the "Russian Invaliden" a preliminary communication of the Government was published to the effect that 'the Government was much concerned over the events that had taken place and by the Austrian ultimatum to Servia. The Government was following intently the development of the Servo-Austrian conflict, to which Russia cannot remain indifferent.' This communication has been reprinted by all papers with very favorable commentaries. All of us are convinced that this time no Rasputin will prevent Russia from fulfilling her duty. Germany, which pushed Austria on, has almost decided to measure herself with us before we rebuild our fleet and the Balkan States have yet recovered from war. We must look the danger square in the eye and not cover our heads as during the Balkan War when Kokowzow thought only of the Bourse. That time, however, the war was not so serious because the Balkan Alliance was fully armed. Yet among us the street demonstrations which were directed against the miserable Austrians were then broken up by the police. Now, however, such demonstrations are gladly welcomed. Above all, we hope that the rule of cowardice (after the fashion of Kokowzow) and certain shouters and mystics is over. The war is a tempest. Let even catastrophes come, it would be much better than to endure this intolerable oppression. From experience I know definitely that for me the quietest place is in the front, where one sees the danger in its natural size and that is not so terrible; it is at its worst in the rear guard where the atmosphere of cowardice prevails. Improbable rumors fly about and panic. In the coming war, however, the interior of Russia will be the rear guard."

*Germany**Need not be returned.*

GERMAN AND ENGLISH NAVAL FORCE COMPARED.

SUBJECT

From Z No. 169 Date July 31, 1914., 19

Replying to O. N. I. No. _____ Date _____, 19

For the first time in ten years a British Squadron visited Kiel. They spent the week June 23d to 30th. This visit was made possible by the improved relations between the two countries and was marked by great efforts on the part of the German Navy to cultivate cordial relations with the British. There is, however, an underlying antagonism, especially on the British side, which makes lasting results from meetings of this sort of problematic value.

The English Squadron consisted of 4 battleships of the "KING GEORGE V" class and three cruisers of the "SOUTHAMPTON" class. To compare with them, the Germans had ships of the "FRIEDRICH DER GROSSE" class of the same year, as the "KING GEORGE V" and of the "ROSTOCK" class.

In battery power, freeboard, height of gun positions and arrangement of turrets, the English ships far outclassed the German. In protection the Germans had the advantage.

In personnel the German crews were physically stronger and stouter men. In the athletic sports where pure physical strength was the factor, the Germans won easily. For instance the British put up a number of teams for the tug-of-war, not one of which could stand against the German teams. Where activity of mind came into play, the English were on the whole better.

The German sailor, drawn largely from the provinces bordering on the North Sea and the Baltic, and accustomed before conscription to hard labor, is usually a powerful man.

The German sailors in dress and bearing reflected the rigid, military system under which they are trained and which accentuates their already somewhat stiff and wooden bearing. Their dress uniform is handsomer and more attractive than the English.

The English officers are more active in mind and body than the German. They take their profession and duties in a lighter vein, but apparently accomplish more than the German does with his genius for overorganization and his hard, conscientious, and mechanical system of drills.

Barring the torpedo boat and submarine services which do not enter into this discussion I should judge that the British fleet was still more efficient ship for ship in personnel and material than the German.

*Germany**Need not be returned.*SUBJECT ~~WAR PREPARATIONS~~From Z No. 176 Date July 30, 1914., 19

Replying to O. N. I. No. _____ Date _____, 19

The political situation in Europe has been so critical for about a week that everything has been done short of mobilization.

The German High Sea Fleet was recalled from its summer exercises on the Norwegian Coast and prepared for action. All leaves have been stopped and officers and men on leave recalled. The Reserve Fleet and torpedo boats are ready for instant manning. A general European war is considered inevitable if Russia takes up the cause of Serbia and begins military operations against Austria.

A high Government official tells me that the Austrian Government had proof that the plot by which the heir to the Austrian throne and his wife were murdered last month was known and countenanced by the Servian Government and for this reason, as well as for many other acts of Servian aggression, Austria could not be expected to deal leniently with her.

July 30, 1914.

Conditions in Germany continue to show expectancy of war. The Emperor held a conference at the New Palace in Potsdam last evening at which were the Civil, Army and Navy officials responsible for the preparations of the country for war, the planing of campaigns and the selection of personnel.

Those representing the Navy were Grossadmiral von Tirpitz, Minister for the Navy, Admiral von Müller, Head of the Naval Cabinet, Admiral von Pohl, Head of the Naval General Staff. So far the mobilization orders are not out, but work is being rushed day and night on all ships near completion or under repairs.

The condition which Germany has to confront is a serious one with England, France and Russia against her. It is believed here that Italy's support will be half-hearted on account of the well known antipathy between Austria and Italy. Austria will assist Germany as far as she can, but the war against Serbia promises to keep her a good deal occupied.

The getting of provisions for mobilization is going on and wholesale dealers in Berlin will not take orders, as they are delivering everything to the Army. Higher prices for all necessities have begun to appear.

July 31, 1914.

The situation remains about the same.-
Orders have been issued forbidding the exportation of food stuffs from Germany. I am informed on excellent authority that yesterday a German note was submitted to Russia and France asking for the reasons for the mobilization of Russian troops and the preparations that were going on at the French frontier. On the answer of this note depended the mobilization of the German Army and Navy.

At eleven o'clock last night it was reported an answer only partially satisfactory had been received and another note had been sent. As the mobilization orders are not out this morning, the situation may be said to have improved.

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